

EEO counselors help co-workers deal with discrimination issues

Kennedy Space Center employees routinely help each other with challenges on the job but there is a select group who volunteer their time to assist those who feel they have been a victim of discrimination in the workplace.

The KSC Equal Opportunity Program Office (EO) offers peer counseling services to employees who feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or physical or mental handicap.

The volunteer counselors are trained in EEO law and counseling techniques and receive periodic update training. They do fact-finding and attempt to resolve employee complaints at the lowest possible level.

If an individual feels they have been discriminated against, they must contact a counselor within 45 days of the alleged incident. If resolution is not achieved, the employee has the option of participating in an Alternative Dispute Resolution process involving a management representative and an appointed mediator. If resolution is still not achieved, the employee may then file a formal complaint.

The EEO counselors potentially save NASA tens of thousands of dollars a year in court costs, attorneys fees, and hours of investigation and litigation by resolving complaints at the lowest possible level.

Brenda Willis, RM-SYS, and Cedric Hill, TV-MSD, recently



FROM THE LEFT are new EEO counselors Louise Boyd, Frank Merceret and Connie Dobrin, retiring counselor Brenda Willis, new counselor Thomas Yensco, counselors Betty Valentine and Rose Rayfield, and new counselor Pam Mullenix.

retired from the group. Willis served for more than 23 years and was among the first volunteer counselors.

The Equal Opportunity Program Office recently added five new counselors for a total of nine. Counselors get involved for many reasons, from a basic concern for people to the utilization of special skills and training.

The new counselors are:

Louise Boyd, 867-7881, management analyst and program manager for civil service salaries and benefits in the Workforce Management Office. Boyd has worked for NASA since July of 1982. She said she got involved initially because of her interest in people.

"I like people -- I interface heavily with the personnel side of the house so it seemed like a natural transition."

Connie Dobrin, 867-3431, property administrator in the Procurement Mission Support Office. Dobrin started working at KSC nearly 20 years ago. After hours she volunteers as a counselor at a rape crisis center. "I'm interested in the problems people have," she said. "I want to understand -- to listen better."

Frank Merceret, 867-2666, chief of the Applied Meteorology Unit and deputy to the lead of the KSC Weather Office. Merceret came to KSC in 1991 after working for the NOAA Environmental Research Laboratory's Hurricane Research Division and then practicing law for seven years as a criminal prosecutor for the State of Florida in Miami. He worked as an EEO counselor when he was with NOAA and he said that

those skills, combined with his experience negotiating legal settlements, should enable him to serve his co-workers effectively as a counselor. "I want to make social as well as technical and managerial contributions to the organization," he said.

Pam Mullenix, 867-2552, currently on special detail with the Office of the Chief Counsel. She has worked at KSC since 1986 and is considering going to law school. Mullenix volunteers to serve as a counselor because "it's an opportunity to help when people need help," she said.

Thomas Yensco, 867-9889, a quality engineering technician since 1989. Yensco has worked with the government and in the Air Force reserve for 23 years.

During that time he said he has seen the military evolve from a white-male-dominated organization to one that is more representative of the country's diverse population. He is interested in seeing the government achieve that mix while protecting those who have worked their way through the system. Yensco has a minor degree in psychology and said the position would give him good training and "allow me to give something back."

The new counselors join Rose Rayfield, 867-2622, PA-PSE; Bob Deliwala, 867-7969, DM-MED; Joe Gacek, 799-7262, RM-ENG, and Betty Valentine, 867-3749, CM-PMO, to complete the volunteer staff. Counselors can be contacted directly or through the EEO office, 867-2307.

Ombudsman program established to address procurement concerns

A new NASA Ombudsman Program has been created to address the procurement concerns of NASA contractors before they become problems.

The idea for this program was conceived when NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin made a commitment to NASA contractors to establish a program to improve communication be-

tween government and industry. The intent is to provide offerors, potential offerors and contractors with a single point of contact to address their concerns if issues arise.

The Agency-wide ombudsman is Tom Luedtke, 202/358-3082.

Deputy Director Gene Thomas, 867-2355, is representing KSC.

Changes...

(Continued from Page 4)

ment of the company's computational physics laboratory.

Dr. Ken Munechika, currently director of Ames, has been named to the newly-created position as director of the Moffett Federal Airfield, effective March 4.

"This move represents the increasing importance of California's Moffett Field to its current and future occupants and to the Silicon Valley," Goldin

said. Munechika will be responsible for seeing that the resident agencies and Ames are provided with all the services normally associated with a federal airfield.

Goddard Space Flight Center Director Joseph Rothenberg announced that Alphonso Diaz has been named deputy director of that center, effective Feb. 4. Diaz previously served as deputy associate administrator for Space Science at NASA Headquarters.